

# THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cooper.*



JOHN'S VISIT.

## WITHOUT INTENDING IT;

OR, JOHN TINCROFT, BACHELOR AND BENEDICT.

CHAPTER XXVII.—MR. RUBRIC'S LETTER.

It was no easy matter for John Tincroft to settle himself down again in his dull college room. His thoughts would wander to the not very distant past in spite of himself and his resolutions. Especially he thought with some indignation and disgust of the treatment he had received from young

Wilson, but he checked himself in this direction. "I should have been unreasonable, too, if I had been in his place, and he or anybody else in mine," he said to himself. "And I have brought all this mortification on myself by my monstrous folly."

Then his reflections shifted to the unhappy damsel at High Beech Farm. "If it hadn't been for me," he sadly argued, "she might have had a husband, or been looking forward to one, who if not a very kind one—for I don't believe he would have been

kind to her—nor a very wealthy one, would at least have rescued her from her miserable home, and been her bread-winner and protector. And now—”

But what was the use of thinking all this? What more could John do to undo the mischief he had wrought? He did not know. As to thinking of Sarah Wilson as his own wife,—the idea was too preposterous to be entertained. No doubt, to a certain extent, and in a certain way, the young person had pleased him. It had been agreeable to him to gaze on her flaxen locks, her blue sparkling eyes, and all the rest of those personal charms; and he had been foolish enough to give himself up to the soft delirium. But Tincroft knew, when he came to think of it, that, even supposing he were in a condition to marry, and supposing also that Sarah Wilson would take him as a husband, she was no more suited to him than he was to her.

But he was *not* in a position to take a wife. His patrimony had been almost swallowed up in that unhappy chancery suit, which, notwithstanding the new witness who had come forward on his side, seemed to be as far off as ever from its termination; for whether her testimony would be of the least use in the world began to be questioned. Well then, what had he to look forward to but his appointment in India? And should he marry in England, under present circumstances, at any rate, the appointment would have to be abandoned. And then—

And so John went on meditating; and all the schooling he had given himself was inoperative here; for was he not right in considering his ways?

He had not ceased these considerations, which so sorely disturbed his peace by day, and broke his rest by night, when, about a month after his return from his unsuccessful mission in the north, he received a letter from Mr. Rubric, which put the coping-stone upon his massive fabric of self-reproaches. We give the letter entire.

“My dear Tincroft,”—so the letter began. “My dear Tincroft,—I am afraid that what I have to write will distress you; and I would spare you the pain, only that I believe it will be succeeded by the satisfaction you will undoubtedly feel, if it should be in your power to give some little assistance in the case I am about to mention.

“The short of the matter is, your friends at High Beech, in whom you have taken so much kindly interest, are just now plunged in deeper sorrow than even when you were last in this neighbourhood. Poor Mark Wilson is dead; so as far as this world is concerned, his troubles, self-wrought as they were, are over. His health, already undermined by his many years’ excesses, broke down soon after his relinquishment of the farm; and he never rallied. It was hoped by some that he would have been led to reflection by the blow which had descended upon him, and that he would have awoke to a sense of his former conduct, so as to have become a wiser, if a sadder man. But his misfortunes did not have this effect upon him.

“We are told on the highest authority that though the spirit of a man may sustain his infirmity, the burden of a wounded spirit is insupportable. It was so with Mark Wilson. There had been a time when it was said of him that he was a good fellow, and nobody’s enemy but his own. A wretched fallacy, this, when said of any one; for we know that none of us liveth to himself; and that no man can injure himself without injury being inflicted or re-

flected upon others. Mark’s experience must have taught him this; but instead of turning from the vices which had ruined him and his, he clung to them to the last, desperately abandoning himself to intemperance; and so he died; and was buried not many days ago.

“And now comes my story. Not only are the widow and daughter in deep distress on account of this bereavement—for they had not lost all love, though they must long since have parted with any real respect for the unhappy man—but they are in positive destitution. I am afraid the brother, Matthew Wilson, is not kindly disposed. No doubt he had much to try him in respect of Mark; and he may feel that he is not bound to keep his sister-in-law and niece in idleness. At any rate, whatever may be his feelings, he has announced to them that they must leave the house, which, such as it is, he wants for his son George, who is about to be married; and that he has no intention of continuing the weekly payments he made to his brother whilst living, under pretence of being wages for his work on the farm.

“I have laid the case before our friend, Mr. Richard Grigson. But, I am sorry to say, his prejudices are, at present, so strong on the subject, that he declines to interfere in any way. He says, truly enough, that he lost much money by Mark Wilson as a tenant; and he gives this as a reason for throwing off any kind of solicitude for the wife and daughter of the unhappy man. He says, also, that there are better born and bred women than Mrs. Mark in the parish poorhouse, and she must go there; while the daughter must make up her mind to go to service. And no doubt this is a utilitarian way of looking at the subject; but it presses very hardly upon the widow and the fatherless girl, in both of whom I am bound to take an interest as my own parishioners.

“My object in writing to you, dear Tincroft, is simply to ask if you are able, and feel disposed, to assist me in helping these poor creatures. I have an idea that if a little time were given to them, some plan might be devised for their advantage, at any rate to save one of them from the degradation of pauperism. Perhaps, indeed, domestic service might be the best thing for Sarah Wilson, if she could be brought to see it so; but then the mother must be left untended; and it appears to me that the daughter’s proper place at present is home, if a home can be procured—to say nothing of the poor child’s unfitness for hard work among strangers, for servant-girls in these parts have very little kindness or sympathy shown to them in general. I am doing what I can, but I am quite, or almost, working alone in the matter; and any small mite, if you can intrust it in my hands, shall be used to the best of my ability on their behalf. Only remember, dear friend, the old saying, ‘*Bis dat qui cito dat.*’

“I am, etc., etc.,

“THEOPHILUS RUBRIC.”

There was a postscript to this letter, as follows:—

“I should not have written to you on this matter but for the part you have recently taken in Sarah Wilson’s affairs, and for my entire trust in your strict honour. I know that Sarah can be nothing to you more than an object of sympathy and kindness; and I deeply regret that any former unfortunate *contretemps*, misunderstood at the time, should ever have led me to do you a moment’s injustice. Pray pardon me.

"I may as well add that Walter Wilson has written a letter home, which I have seen, and which proves to a certainty that he will never be reconciled to his unfortunate cousin."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.—TWENTY POUNDS.

JOHN TINCROFT read Mr. Rubric's letter, paced his room silently, then re-read it. When he came to the postscript, he not only read but studied it.

"I don't precisely see what it means," he said to himself; "but there's one thing to do, that's plain; I must see Mr. Roundhand. I suppose he will let me have it."

In another five minutes the groomsman, equipped in his academics, was making his way across the High Street, and then through the Peckwater to St. Aldates.

"I want twenty pounds, Mr. Roundhand," said John to his lawyer, who was also to some extent his banker, inasmuch as he managed the young man's money affairs, such as they were, as well as his chancery suit.

"It is a curious thing," said the lawyer, laughing, "but I rarely meet with a man who does not want twenty pounds."

"You are right, I dare say," said John; "but I not only want it, but want you to supply the want." Mr. Roundhand dropped his smile. "Really," he began, but Tincroft stopped him.

"I know what you are going to say,—that I have already drawn the greater part of this present quarter's interest. Never mind; it must be taken out of the next."

"I was going to say something more, friend Tincroft. Do you know the extent, or non-extent, of your present entire resources? I am afraid you have not studied the last statement I handed to you."

John acknowledged that he trusted so completely to his adviser, and placed himself so entirely in his hands, that he had scarcely glanced at the important document.

"Just so; as I supposed. And perhaps you will be surprised to learn that, what with your college expenses and the costs of your chancery suit, which I assure you are managed as economically as possible—"

"I wish the chancery suit were at the bottom of the sea," interpolated John.

"Yes, yes; but that is out of court altogether; and you would not want the Tincroft estate to bear the suit company, I suppose."

John did not know about that.

"But to go on with what I was saying," resumed the lawyer. "Would you be surprised to learn that all you have in the world amounts to—" and he whispered a few words in his client's ear.

John turned slightly pale; but he soon rallied. "I dare say you are right, Mr. Roundhand. But what you tell me only confirms me in what has been some time on my mind."

"And that is—"

"To have done with the chancery suit altogether."

"Impossible, my dear friend. It must go on—that is," added the lawyer, "until the whole estate itself is swallowed up—"

"In the sea? Well, that is what I said, isn't it?" John asked.

"Yes, in the sea, if you like; or the whirlpool of law, if you like it better. However, so the case stands; and sooner than give it up, I will carry it

on at my own cost. What do you think? Since I saw you last, I have been hunting up that Saddlebrook doctor's will in Doctors' Commons; have compared signatures, and submitted both to an expert; and—and we shall carry the day after all."

"Well, then," said Tincroft, who seemed very little elated with the promise which had been so often repeated and disappointed, that it was like the "hope deferred" which "maketh the heart sick"—"well, then, there will be less difficulty in your making the advance I ask for. I really must have that twenty pounds."

But Mr. Roundhand had something else to say. "Every pound you spend now—pray consider, Mr. Tincroft, for I only speak in your own interests—every pound you spend now, unnecessarily I mean, will be so much deducted from what you will positively require for your outfit to India."

"But if the chancery suit is so sure of being soon terminated in my favour, perhaps I shall not need to go to India after all," said John.

Mr. Roundhand shook his head doubtfully, as implying that the Tincroft estate might not, if obtained, hold out a sufficient inducement to alter his client's plans.

"At any rate, I question whether I shall not throw up the appointment," John added.

"You don't mean that, surely?" said the lawyer, "who was himself surprised now."

"It will depend on circumstances," said John, quietly; "and if my having the twenty pounds I want to-day, or not having it, were to make all the difference between my going to India or staying in England, I should take the money and stay."

"There's nothing more to be said, then," remarked Mr. Roundhand, "except that a wilful will have its way, and that I don't understand you—"

"I doubt whether I understand myself," sighed John, inwardly.

"—but the money is yours to do what you like with, Mr. Tincroft;" and saying this, the lawyer opened his cheque-book, and filled up a cheque. "You know where to cash it," he added, as he placed it in John's hand.

Yes, John knew where to cash it. Ten minutes afterwards he was at the counter of the Oxford Old Bank, exchanging it for a crisp ten-pound Bank of England note, and the rest in gold.

The bank-note did not remain long in John Tincroft's possession. Hastening back to his room, it was securely enclosed and sealed up with black wax, in a sheet of Bath post, on which were scribbled these lines:—

"My dear Sir,—Many thanks for your confidence in me, and for having brought the distressing case to my knowledge. Please apply the enclosed as you best think fit, immediately; and do not be surprised should I follow in the course of a few days."

Having post-paid and posted this packet, John returned to his rooms, shut himself in, and was seen no more that day. The two next days he mechanically went the daily round of his early chapel and subsequent studies; but he was missed in the dining-hall. When Tom Grigson went on the second evening to see what ailed his friend, he found, to his surprise, that the outer door of John's room was fast shut.

"Sported the oak, has he?" said Tom to himself. "Never knew him do that before. What is the matter now, I wonder?"



## CHAPTER XXIX.—JOHN TINCROFT'S BOLD STROKE.

HELPLESS widow Mark and poor Sarah were seated together one chilly evening in spring, some ten days after the funeral, by a poor fire in their brick-floored kitchen. They had no attendant now, for the tender-hearted Meg had been dismissed on the giving up of the farm, so that all the work, rough and smooth, of the house had fallen almost entirely on Sarah, who had no time now to sit at her ease, the sultana of the shabby parlour, with its knobby-seated chairs, even if she had wished to do so. And for all other purposes, the kitchen did as well.

They were sadly disconsolate, the two poor women, and they were very lonely. As was to be expected, little sympathy had been shown to them by their relatives, even in the first hours of their bereavement; and that little had entirely ceased. Had they been of the labouring class, they would have fared better in this respect, for the poor, in a country village, at least, do feel for one another and help each other when in sorrow. But the Wilsons were above them, while those on their own level, or higher in station, "passed by on the other side."

The only one exception to this was found in our friend Mr. Rubrie. Probably his position as parish clergyman laid a kind of obligation upon him to weep with those who wept. But besides this, he really and unofficially would have done the same thing if he had never worn a surplice nor had a bishop's hands laid on his head. We have seen how he had made friends of the mammon of unrighteousness on behalf of his destitute parishioners in the case of John Tincroft; and that, with a less satisfactory result, he had made the same efforts in other quarters.

It was owing to the assistance afforded by Mr. Rubrie, backed up by John Tincroft's remittance, that the widow and her daughter were not already separated,—the first taking her way to the parish "refuge for the destitute," the second to the situation of "maid of all work," which had been offered her in a neighbouring farmer's domicile. But the time of parting, though postponed, was inevitable; and this evening they were helplessly and sorrowfully bemoaning their hard lot, not altogether waiving mutual reproaches of each other, and joint censures against the dead and buried, forgetful, if they had ever heard, of the charitable maxim, "*De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*"

A hesitating, timid knock at the door interrupted the painful talk, and on opening it, Sarah Wilson saw herself confronted by John Tincroft.

Her first impulse was to close the door in his face, and to run up-stairs and hide herself under the bed, or elsewhere; and no wonder, perhaps, as she looked upon John as the cause of her irreconcilable quarrel with her cousin and lover. She thought better of this, however, on remembering John's recent kindness—reflecting likewise that, in the former case, it was not Mr. Tincroft so much as her mischief-making cousin Elizabeth who was really in fault. So when the awkward and unexpected visitor stammered out an apology for his intrusion, she offered him her hand in amity, and invited him to walk in and draw up to the fire.

There was a strange alteration in John since she saw him last, the maiden thought. He was pale and thin, and looked troubled. The same thought crossed Tincroft's mind as he looked at Sarah. "Poor thing!" he mentally ejaculated; "she has passed

through deep waters, so no wonder she has lost some of the bloom I was so foolish as to admire." He did not say this, of course. Indeed, his eyes rested only for a moment on the younger woman.

"I heard of your great sorrow," said he, softly, turning to the widow, "only a few days ago, and I think you will believe that I feel deeply distressed on your account, Mrs. Wilson, and on your daughter's also. I could not rest till I had seen you," he added, "so I came down by the 'Tally-ho' as soon as I could get away from Oxford."

It was very good of Mr. Tincroft to think of them at all, Mrs. Mark sobbed. Sarah did not speak.

"And I am afraid, too," continued John, "that you have other sorrows besides that of your great loss."

The floodgates were opened now. Other sorrows! Yes, indeed! And then came out the old string and bead-roll of grievances, with many new beads added, about the unnatural conduct of Matthew Wilson to his poor brother while living, and of his cruelty to herself and Sarah since his death. Then there was Walter, too, and his base desertion of poor Sarah, who would now have to go out to service, while she herself, her widowed self—but there, it didn't matter what became of an old woman like her. A work-house was good enough, too good, in fact; and anyhow it wouldn't be for long. And then, overcome by her emotions, the unhappy bereaved broke out into loud wailings and hysterical tears, in the full flow of which she retired to her room above to "lay down for a bit" as she sobbed.

All this time the daughter had taken no part in the conversation, to which, indeed, she had seemed to pay but little heed. No doubt she was accustomed to these or similar complainings and outbursts of futile grief. She had her own sorrows to bear; but she endured them, if not more resignedly, certainly less noisily; but that she felt them, John was sure, when he glanced at her worn countenance, and the occasional nervous twitching of her upper lip.

"You have not spoken—you do not speak—of your own troubles, Miss Wilson," said he, presently, after an awkward silence when the mother had left the room.

"Why should I, Mr. Tincroft? What would be the use?" Sarah asked, impatiently.

"Perhaps not much, miss; except that sometimes the heart is relieved by the—the outspeaking of the mouth. It isn't the deepest-felt trials that are the loudest in general, I think. But if you will not speak of yours, may I put a few questions?" John timidly asked.

"It must be as you like, Mr. Tincroft."

John paused a second or two; then he said, still timidly,—

"It is true, I am afraid, that your uncle and aunt are unkind to you in your distress?"

"It seems so to us, Mr. Tincroft," replied Sarah, with a little of her old spirit flashing from her eyes; "but I dare say they would tell you different; and, if you please, I would rather not hear or say anything about them."

"Well, well, I will not distress you unnecessarily. But, believe me," said John, kindly, "I have reasons for asking. And will you mind telling me truly if—if you still have any—what shall I say?—any hope or expectation—you know what I mean?" went on poor Tincroft, scarcely knowing what he said, or how he said it.

"I don't know what you mean, sir," said Sarah, when John came to a sudden halt.

"You know," said he, changing his conversational position, "I took a journey down into the north, not so very long ago, in your interest, as I at the time firmly believed, Miss Wilson. I did this without asking your permission; but I hope my motive was not—has not been misinterpreted by you."

"I dare say you meant well, sir," said the young lady, coldly.

"But I did not do well. True, I candidly confess it; and I see now that the embassy was injured by the ambassador. At any rate, my journey proved worse than useless, as it then seemed. But possibly since then—I have reasons for asking, Miss Wilson—possibly since then your cousin Walter—"

"And if he had, sir," said Sarah, interpreting, as it seemed, what John was so methodically and carefully, but yet stumbingly, trying to enunciate; and, speaking with an energy and spirit with which he was inwardly pleased,—“if he had, do you think I would have listened to him after—” Sarah's bosom heaved as she spoke, and her pent-up feelings found a vent in tears. Presently, when calmed down, she resumed, "I am much obliged to you, Mr. Tincroft, for your good meanings; but Walter Wilson is nothing to me now, nor will he ever be."

Another awkward pause, and then again John broke the ice,—

"I have not much more to ask, Miss Wilson, and believe me when I assure you that mine are not idle and impertinent questions; but is it true that you have no other resource than that mentioned by your mother? Is it possible that you will have to go into domestic service?"

"It seems so, Mr. Tincroft; I don't know of anything else I am fit for, if I am fit for that," said Sarah, with quivering lips.

"You are fit for something better than that," said John, softly; "and you are fit for something better than I can offer. But if you wouldn't mind being a poor man's wife—" And here again John came to a pause.

"I don't know what you can mean, Mr. Tincroft." This was said in a tone of unfeigned surprise, accompanied by a look of alarmed pride. "I hope you don't mean to insult me because everybody else does the same."

"I am very far from intending this," replied John. "And I would not make you an offer if I could think of anything better for you. I know," he went on, "that in some respects we are not entirely suited to each other—at least, that I am not everything you might look for. I am a recluse, and shy, and much more that isn't agreeable; but I know I am honest in my wish to make you happy."

"Mr. Tincroft, what *do* you mean?" exclaimed Sarah, wildly.

And by degrees John told the damsel what he meant, namely, that the only compensation he could make to her for the unintentional mischief he had wrought was to take her himself for better, for worse, for richer or poorer, and so on, till death should them part. He begged her to understand that he was very poor, that he had no certain prospect of an income after the little that remained of his property was gone; for he had determined on giving up his appointment if Sarah would agree to his proposal. And as to the Tincroft estate of which he had once vainly boasted, he had lost all faith in

that. But there was enough, he went on to say, to maintain them (and Sarah's mother too, if she would live with them) in very strict economy for a year or two; and John thought he might get some employment in teaching, perhaps, or in some other way. But as he had always been under a cloud, so he expected to be to the end of the chapter. "And so, Miss Wilson, you see," added he, by way of summing up, "it is but little that I can offer you. Still, if you will accept it, I will promise to be your faithful husband."

Poor Sarah! She could scarcely believe her own ears for wild, blank amazement.

"I do not ask for your answer to-night, Miss Wilson," John said; and then he added, "I am staying with Mr. Rubrie, who knows why I came on here this evening, and he will call on you to-morrow for your decision. So let us say 'Good night' now."

Their hands met, and while John's trembled with excitement, he could feel that Sarah's was deadly cold. In another moment Sarah was left alone.

Then a low, sobbing cry broke from her, and the piteous exclamation, "Oh! what shall I do? What shall I do?" was followed by a flood of tears which relieved her full heart.

#### THE FIJI ISLANDS.\*

Two centuries ago the Fiji Islands were first discovered by Captain Cook; but with the exception of a band of convicts who escaped from Australia and settled in the Archipelago, no other Europeans visited it till about five-and-thirty years ago, when some Wesleyan missionaries from the Tonga, or, as they are more generally called, the Friendly Islands, gained a footing on one of the Windward Islands of the group. The visit of the United States Exploring Expedition, in 1840, brought the Fijis into notice, and they are now being rapidly colonised by white men, chiefly from Australia and New Zealand.

The Fijian Archipelago, containing above 200 islands, and extending about 300 miles from east to west, and 200 from north to south, is in the Pacific Ocean, midway between Tonga and New Caledonia. The climate is therefore tropical; but the trade winds moderate the heat, and probably render the islands healthy, diarrhoea and dysentery being the only climatic diseases, and seldom proving fatal except in cases where the constitution is shattered by drink.

The principal islands of the group are Viti Levu, Vanua Levu, Kandavu, Taviumi, Rambi, Koro, and Ovalau. The two first-named have each a circumference of 250 miles, and contain the bulk of the cotton-planters. These, like all the other islands, have natural harbours in the exquisite coral reefs which, as a rule, girdle the shore "at a distance of from half a mile to two miles. Within the barrier the water is as smooth as a lake, but the trade winds . . . send the long rollers of the Pacific against the reef, which varies from five feet to thirty feet in width. . . . These reefs do not always encircle the islands, . . . but sometimes stretch out in a direct line from a point for several miles, and there, meeting the ocean billows, 'make a white wreath of a league of sea.' A long line of

\* "Fiji in 1870: being the letters of 'The (Melbourne) Argus' Special Correspondent." Lockwood and Co., 7, Stationers' Hall Court.

silent ripples is often at first the only indication of the presence of one of these spines of coral and volcanic rock; then the rollers come against them with a sound like a thunderclap, and the waters, broken into milk-white foam, hurry along the side with wonderful impetuosity, like an immense jet of vapour, until, meeting with a greater obstruction, a column is thrown high into the air, and forming an aqueous arch, bursts suddenly into spray. The foam-crests of the reefs can be seen at a considerable distance in the day time, and their unceasing sullen roar gives warning to the mariner of their unwelcome proximity at night." Viti Levu, or Naviti Levu (Great Fiji), is the most populous island of the group. It possesses several fine natural harbours, and its principal river, the Rewa, is navigable for forty miles. Although the coast lands have been purchased by settlers, the mountainous interior has once only been reached by white men, and is still the abode of heathen natives. Ovalau contains Levuka, the commercial capital of the group. The site of the town has many natural disadvantages, and the only reason for its being chosen appears to be that Tui Levuka, the late chief of the district, showed unvarying kindness toward the white population of that settlement. The town consists of one street, the open beach, and is bounded at each end by an abrupt rock, and at the back high volcanic mountain ranges forbid any extension of houses. Ovalau, like other of the islands, is rich in tropical produce. The orange, lemon, and pineapple-tree, the bread-fruit, the tapioca, guava, ginger, turmeric, arrowroot, and croton-oil plants, all grow on its grateful soil. Vanua Levu (the great land) is next in size to Viti Levu.

Some of the rocks on the coast are 4,000 feet high, but the speciality of the island consists in five hot springs, which have a temperature of from 200 to 210 degrees. The natives turn these springs to good account for culinary purposes. The island is divided into three chiefdoms: Thakaundrovi (under the rule of Tui Thakau); Mbau (under Tui Mbau); and Mathuata (under Ritova). Taviuni possesses the principal cotton plantations of the group. Koro is described as being, "probably, the finest and most fertile" of the islands. Totoya (not mentioned in the list of principal islands) seems the most striking in formation. It is, apparently, an extinct crater, circular in form, and six miles in diameter. The basin contains salt water, thirty fathoms deep, and three miles in diameter; it is surrounded by a ridge of mountain peaks which rise 1,200 feet above the level of the sea, and which, on the south, divide to low-water level, forming a passage too narrow to admit a ship, but sufficiently wide to cause an ebb and flow of the tide within the bowl. Mango Island is also probably an extinct crater, though, in this case, the mouth has been converted into a sheltered cotton plantation. The small island of Mbau, which is joined to Viti Levu by a coral reef fordable at low water, is noteworthy as being the residence and political capital of Thakombau, the most influential of the native chiefs, who has received the title of King of Fiji. The description of this remarkable man must be quoted at length; but first some idea of the general inhabitants of his kingdom must be given. Being the darker of the two great Polynesian races, they are of a deep olive tint. Where Tongan inter-marriages have taken place, as in, more particularly, the eastern group, the inhabitants are lighter, but the mountain tribes are sometimes positively black.

Those natives whom the influence of Christianity has not yet reached are cannibals, polygamists, and infanticides. They are described as being devoid of the sense of gratitude, having no word in their language to express thanks. They are, as a rule, cowardly, though where revenge is determined on they willingly sacrifice their lives. Some instances of true courage are on record. Mr. L. Fison, the missionary, has published the life of a convert, Joel, of whom the following story is told. While bathing with a young chief, an enormous shark was seen advancing so rapidly that escape seemed impossible. Without hesitation, Joel thrust his hand and arm down the enemy's throat, who, quite discomfited by so unexpected a reception, slowly retired, leaving his conqueror with life-long scars.

The different native tribes are headed by chiefs greater or lesser, who are a singularly fine race of men, owing, probably, to the fact that only the healthy children among them are allowed to live. Their gait is noble, and Thakombau's father is said to have remarked to Commander Wilkes: "Your men are, no doubt, very good warriors, but they waddle like ducks." The tribes are frequently at war one with another, and the political divisions of the islands vary as frequently as successes or defeats take place. They have no other principle than that might is right. Thakombau, the chief of Mbau, and nominal king of Fiji, "was born about the year 1817. Like his father, Tanoa, he was a ruthless cannibal. He had barely attained his sixth year when his hands were first stained with the blood of his countrymen. At that age a lad, taken prisoner in battle, was brought before him, and he clubbed him to death. In 1832, the chiefs of Mbau, rebelling against their king, Tanoa had to quit his dominions. The young Levu (the name by which Thakombau was called when a child), who was left behind, being considered harmless on account of his youth, while apparently wholly engrossed with the pleasures suited to his years, skilfully intrigued against the usurper, and eventually accomplished the restoration of his father after an exile of five years. The success of this well-planned scheme gained for him the title of Thakombau (evil to Mbau) from the rebel party, and he has ever since been known by that name. It was the ancient custom to have two rulers of equal importance, the Roko Tui (sacred king) and the Vunivalu (root of war). The rank Tanoa and Thakombau held was that of Vunivalu. The introduction of Christianity has destroyed the importance of the Roko Tui, but the title is still retained. When Tanoa died, in 1852, five of his wives were strangled. In July of the following year Thakombau was formally invested with the rank and dignity of Vunivalu of Mbau. The event was celebrated by the sacrifice of eighteen Fijians, who were ready cooked for eating, when, through the exertions of a missionary and Mr. Owen, an Adelaide merchant trading in Fiji, the bodies were given up to the latter for burial, on his threatening to cease all business transactions if the cannibal feast took place. Cannibalism was practised in Mbau until 1854. The Wesleyan missionaries had long been endeavouring to gain over Thakombau to their cause, and on the 30th April in that year, after much vacillation, he took the decisive step, when cannibalism at once ceased. At nine o'clock on the morning of that day, the *lali*, the fearful drum which



had sounded the announcement of a cannibal feast only ten days previously, was beaten for an assemblage to witness the Vunivalu's public renunciation of heathenism. He did not abandon polygamy, however, until three years later. In January, 1857, his many wives were dismissed, and he was married to the favourite, his present wife, according to the Wesleyan formula. It is the custom of the missionaries to withhold the right of baptism from natives living in polygamy, and this obstacle being removed, Thakombau and his wife were publicly baptized on the 11th January."

"In accordance with my request previously made," writes the Rev. Mr. Waterhouse, "the King then addressed the assembly. It must have cost him many a struggle to stand up before his court . . . to confess his former sins. In time past he had considered himself a god, . . . now he humbles himself, and adores his great Creator and merciful Preserver. And what a congregation he had! Husbands whose wives he had dishonoured! widows whose husbands he had slain! sisters whose brothers had been strangled by his orders! A thousand stony hearts heaved with fear and astonishment as Thakombau gave utterance to the following sentiments:—'I have been a bad man. I disturbed the country. The missionaries came and invited me to embrace Christianity, but I said to them, "I will continue to fight." God has singularly preserved my life. At one time I thought that I had myself been the instrument of my own preservation; but now I know that it was the Lord's doing. I desire to acknowledge him as the only and the true God. I have scourged the world.' He was deeply affected, and spoke with great diffidence."

Thakombau selected Ebenezer as his baptismal name, and his wife that of Lydia. He has since adhered to his profession of religion as far as outward observances are concerned. The moral laws of his kingdom are administered with as much rigour as those for the raising of revenue. The missionaries have taken great pains to instruct their illustrious convert, and he can read the Fijian Bible with tolerable ease.

Thakombau is described as a remarkable-looking man, six feet high, and although rather stout, of an elastic step and kingly bearing. As a heathen, he wore his hair dressed out in a huge wig; but he now wears it cut short, like all Christian natives. His hair, as well as his moustache, is grey. "Thakombau," adds the author, "is free from the vice of intoxication, though he pledged us in Old Tom, and does not object to take two or three glasses of spirits in a day." Spirit-drinking is, unfortunately, carried to great excess among the natives as well as among the lower class of white settlers. Teetotalism is, however, occasionally adhered to, as in the case of Tui Bau, chief of Bau, who (we learn from an interesting letter in the "Illustrated Australian News" of June 17th) with his secretary are total abstainers.

In 1867 a constitution, framed after the model of that of the Sandwich Islands, was adopted, and, as an act of policy, the whites united with the natives in performing the mock ceremony of crowning Thakombau.

The chiefs next in importance to King Thakombau are Maafu, Tui Thakau, and Tui Mbau. Maafu is the legitimate successor to King George of Tonga: the son of a Christian mother, he is a man of superior education compared with many of his countrymen,

and may be said to be the rival of Thakombau in many things.

Tui Nayau, the chief of Lakomba, is one of the celebrities of the islands, as being so aged that no one remembers to have seen him a young man. He has not been able to walk for some years, and says he thinks death has forgotten him.

Of the chiefs the white settlers purchase their plantations. "Every inch of land in Fiji has an owner. The proprietorship rests in families, the heads of families being the representatives of the title. The family land maintains the whole family, and the members maintain the head of the family. A chief holds his lands under precisely the same tenure as head of a family. . . . But the chief is also the head of his tribe, and, as such, certain rights to the whole lands of the tribe appertain to him. . . . From this complicated tenure it is clear that the alienation of land, however large or small the tract, can be made valid only by the collective act of the whole tribe in the persons of the ruling chief and the heads of families."\* In time of war the natives are often glad to sell their land to prevent its falling into the hands of their enemies. Land is not, however, so easily bought as formerly, since the natives are beginning to understand the value of money. The average value of land in Levuka is now eighteen shillings per foot. £700 or £800 appears to be the lowest sum for which a cotton plantation can be bought and established. About 350,000 acres of land are already in the possession of white men, and of these, 275,000 acres are the property of British subjects. Cotton-growing is the chief mode of product; but some sugar and coffee plantations exist in the islands. Cocoa-nut trees abound, and tortoiseshell and wool also form articles of export. "The bêche-de-mer trade, which was formerly carried on with great profit, . . . has almost died off. The fisheries have, in parts, been exhausted, and, owing to the large influx of Europeans, native labour has been directed into more congenial channels. . . . The value of tortoiseshell has fallen greatly, the price in the colonial markets having changed within the last few years from 20s. to 9s. per lb. If the natives would exert themselves, a plentiful supply could be obtained. It does not appear probable that Fiji will ever be a successful wool-growing country, but sheep are, nevertheless, being imported in considerable numbers; and the increase in cattle, which thrive admirably in many parts of the country, has been considerable within the past two years. The item of sundries includes pigs, timber, and fruit, of which very little is exported, the rapidly growing population consuming everything the natives can produce in the way of food, while all the timber grown is required for stores and houses, the demand being vastly in excess of the supply. The cultivation of sugar has not been attempted on a large scale, the absence of any properly constituted government deterring capitalists from embarking in so expensive an enterprise. . . . Mr. George Burt has grown upland rice in Kandavu of excellent quality, and both coffee and rice may be expected shortly to form articles of export, together with indigo, tobacco, vanilla, and many tropical productions to which no attention has yet been given.

"A new industry which has been recently attracting the attention of settlers is the manufacture of

\* Quoted from Mr. Pritchard's book on the Islands.

*coperak*, as the dried kernel of the cocoa-nut is called. This article fetches £8 a ton in Fiji, and a very high price is obtained in the home markets. The oil is expressed from it by machinery in England, and the residuum is used as oil-cake for fattening cattle. . . . The Ramie plant, or Chinese grass, has also been found to grow well in Fiji. There are at present only a few plants in the country, and they are sold at £1 each."

Cotton to the value of £30,975 was exported from Fiji in 1868; the year following, £45,000 was realised; in 1870 the amount was valued at £90,000. Want of labourers is a great obstacle to the success of the cotton-planter, as native labour is not to be depended on, while, on the other hand, white labour is often not to be had. The severe hurricanes, which may be expected during three months of the year, are an unavoidable disadvantage to which the planter is exposed, and which sometimes devastate his whole plantation before any ingathering has been made. In 1869 a tidal wave, as well as a hurricane, did much damage in Nandi Bay. There is no doubt that the absence of any "properly constituted government" is a drawback not only to the greater adventure, but also to the actual protection and facility of the cotton-planter. Native rule is no rule as touching the white man, who is, consequently, absolutely without law. He is truly described as a patriarch, with the power of life and death over his people, trusting the natives, though powerless to defend himself in the case of a combined attack. A peaceful security seems to reign at present, but were a rebellion to take place, horrors worse than those of the Indian mutiny, treachery greater than that of the Jamaica insurrection, would doubtless be perpetrated.

In 1858 Thakombau offered to cede the Fiji Islands to Great Britain, *i.e.*, to convey 200,000 acres of land to Queen Victoria, upon condition that a certain debt of £9,000 hanging over the head of the King should be paid to America. This debt had originated in a demand for 5,001 dols. 38 cents on the part of Mr. J. B. Williams, the American consul, as compensation for the pillaging of his house during an accidental fire in 1849. In 1853, owing to an assault upon a European vessel by the natives of Malaki, and the subsequent vengeance taken on Malaki, the town of Levau, then containing above fifty whites, was fired, and the greater part burned to the ground. This deed was generally ascribed to Thakombau, and the debt of compensation was, in consequence, increased to 30,000 dols., which ultimately amounted to 45,000 dols., "on account of the interference of the English missionaries, who wished to act as counsel for Thakombau." Commander Boutwell was emissary in the affair for the United States, and on board his ship Thakombau was terrified into signing a promise to pay the unjust claim in two years. With reference to the proposed cession to England, Colonel Smythe, R.A., was sent as commissioner. His report was discouraging, and Thakombau's offer was, accordingly, declined. The debt was, at last, paid by the "Polynesian Company," which is now said to be insolvent.

Since this little sketch was begun, an article on the Government of Fiji, from which the following is an extract, has appeared in the "Globe":—"England and America having definitively declined to grant a protectorate, another effort is being made by the European settlers of Fiji to carry out, in some modified form, the constitution granted by Thakombau

some four years ago, when he was publicly crowned by the whites with a diadem made to order by a local carpenter. A ministry has been formed to give effect to this constitution, which is founded on that of the Hawaiian government." "On the 5th June," says the "Fiji Times," "the principal chiefs and the foreign residents were invited by the King to hear a declaration of the policy of the government," and since then a government office has been opened, and official notices and appointments, signed by Sydney Charles Burt, premier, have been issued.

The moral rule of the islands seems to be, practically, in the hands of the Wesleyan missionaries. They have been at work in Fiji for the last five-and-thirty years. As early as 1835 two of their number established themselves in Lakomba, and three years later others penetrated into Rewa. In 1853 Christianity reached Mbau, the year previous to that in which Thakombau, as we have seen, made his public confession. The whole Bible was published in Fijian by the Bible Society in 1864, and is now in the hands of 104,000 natives, this number being two-thirds of the computed population of the islands.

In the early days of the missionary work not a few devoted men fell victims to hunger, exposure, or ill-treatment. Mr. Baker, and five Christian natives who accompanied him, met with a violent death. Mr. Fison and Mr. Langham consider they owe their lives to their knowledge of the native characteristic of indecision. Finding a plan had been laid to murder them, they promptly left the village, and the natives, taken by surprise, could not form other plans quickly enough to overtake them. The native converts are strict sabbatarians. Not finding their own pleasure, nor speaking their own words, the sabbath is to them "a delight, the day of the Lord, honourable." In this, as in other ways, they set an example for good to many of their white neighbours, whose influence, we are told, the missionaries dread much more than that of the acknowledged heathen. Besides the Wesleyans, Roman Catholic emissaries are also at work, but they have not been nearly so successful as the former.

The native population is said to be decreasing, and a comparison in favour of this statement is made with regard to the Australian and other native races. As a people, the Australians have not received the truth; we are told they *cannot*; though a more recent testimony greatly modifies this statement; but with the Fijians the case is different. They now stand forth, headed by their King, a sabbath-keeping, God-fearing people, and they surely have a right to await a blessing "from generation to generation."

Fiji, as well as its people, is a worthy theme of interest. Politically, there is a want of government; but physically, there are advantages seldom to be met with; while socially there is Christian influence and a natural respect for the white man as being teacher and leader. "They who go forth with brave hearts and willing hands to replenish the earth and subdue it, have before them the prospect of those rewards which have already been reaped by the first hardy settlers of New South Wales and Victoria."

The foregoing narrative we have condensed from the valuable papers in the "Melbourne Argus." To those who seek fuller information we strongly commend a volume, "Fiji and the Fijians," by Thomas Williams and John Calvert (Hodder and Stoughton). The history of missionary work in the islands is there fully narrated.





## A MIDLAND TOUR.

## VIII.

## THE BLACK COUNTRY: WEST BROMWICH—ROWLEY REGIS.

WHILE at Oldbury, we are almost close to West Bromwich, and hasten to call on a friend there whom we have known only by correspondence, but who kindly drives us round the township, pointing out to us its several public buildings, churches, chapels, mission schools, etc. West Bromwich is certainly an extraordinary place. "You cannot tell where it begins or where it ends. You may walk through two or three miles of houses along the high-road and be all the while in West Bromwich; you may see a clustering village afar off across some fields—still West Bromwich; you may leave the high-road altogether, and strike across to the north-east—again and again West Bromwich." It is founded, in more senses than one, upon coal mines. Forty years ago it was a mere village; though a village, as it would appear, of some antiquity, from the curious old houses to be seen there, and one in particular, called Oak House, which seems the very place for some thrilling tale of bygone times, with all spectral accompaniments, having an antique aspect without, and, within, a great hall, rooms panelled with oak, chimney-pieces carved in arabesque, and long flights of broad stairs, with curiously-wrought balusters, leading to rooms all deserted and decaying. Still, within the last half-century or so West Bromwich was only a village. But the land was for the most part the property of Lord Dartmouth—coal in small quantities had long been found there, and was popularly believed to exist under the old red sandstone—and that nobleman, by the advice of Sir Roderick Murchison, made the costly experiment of searching for it under the lower beds of this stratum, and after seven years' labour, and an outlay of £30,000, discovered, nine hundred feet down, the Ten Yard Coal. At the present time there are forty coal-pits at West Bromwich, and the thick coal has been worked at a depth of four hundred yards. The Sandwell Park estate, so much talked of lately, is a part of Lord Dartmouth's property, separated from the other part only by a "fault;" and the coal-beds—if coal be there, as is likely, and to ascertain which sinkings are now being made by the Sandwell Park Coal Company—will, it is thought, extend right away, under Birmingham, to Coventry. The question is one of unusual interest, for on the answer may depend the future of the Midland capital, and the existence of great towns yet perhaps to be!

Both coal and iron, indeed, are here; and these, and the industries to which they give rise, have transformed West Bromwich from an obscure village into one of the most important townships in the Black Country, a place famous for chains and cables, stoves, grates, fenders, fire-irons, box-irons, coffee mills, bedsteads, and hollow ware. It is divided for registration purposes into north-east and south-west districts. Three railways run through it, and it is traversed by several canals. New streets are rapidly being made, a hospital and infirmary have been established, and a market and a town-hall, with public baths, etc., will soon be completed. More than one of the surrounding towns, including Birmingham itself, are supplied with gas by West Bromwich.

Its population, which in 1861 was 41,795, in 1871 was 47,908. It has numerous places of worship, and the parish church—which was more than 700 years old—has been pulled down, and is being rebuilt. Lay readers and preachers have lately been introduced here under commission from Bishop Selwyn. The Wesleyans are in the majority, however, though it is one of those places where Wesley himself was mobbed on his visit to this neighbourhood. It is estimated that school accommodation exists for at least 8,000 children, but not more than 3,000 attend school. And there is a darker side to the picture.

In a social survey of West Bromwich in 1865, the following remarkable statement appears. "There are in West Bromwich—

84 public-houses, and 216 beer-shops .. .. .	800	Grocers, 140; butchers, 55 ..	135
Wine-selling grocers, confectioners, etc. ....	10	Greengrocers, 30; drapers, 41 ..	80
Dealers in drink (not to be drunk on the premises) ..	7	Bakers, flour dealers, etc. ....	43
Pawn-shops, dependent on the above .. .. .	21	Shoemakers, 27; hatters, 3 ..	30
	847		318

The average amount spent in each tippling-house is £10 a week; in all, £3,000 weekly, or £156,000 a year. To every place of worship, Sunday school, and day school, there are four liquor-shops; and to every preacher and day-school teacher there are more than two liquor-sellers!"

Though the number of beer-houses has been somewhat lessened since 1865, we find that the public-houses have been enlarged, and the wine-selling grocers and confectioners have become more numerous. The sale of liquors is now, moreover, made a leading feature in large establishments; in some cases, one side of the shop is completely taken up with the show. It is a sad tale, but we are bound to tell it, in endeavouring to present a correct picture of the district. We hear of a confectioner who has nice little screens, behind which "ladies," who would scorn to enter a public-house, can take wine without being noticed, and where their servants have the same privilege. But you may see each Saturday evening rows of young girls sitting in these shops without any shame, boldly asking for glasses of rum or port, drinking with their companions, and sometimes challenging each other to spend or drink more. In one small room of a wine-shop about forty persons, more than half of them young women from sixteen to twenty-five, have been witnessed drinking together, while men with blackened faces, engaged for the evening, amused them with "nigger" songs. And in every public-house in the centre of the town may be seen every Saturday evening till midnight crowds of boys and girls, young men and women, old men and women, singing, dancing, smoking, drinking, swearing, fighting! Many of those who earn the most money—£5, £10, £12, or more weekly—have not a crown left three days after they have drawn it, are often in debt, and, while their household goods would not fetch half their week's wages, have to get credit or starve till their next pay-day. Then there is a large theatre, and a great music-hall, both attached

to public-houses, and both drawing crowded audiences. And the lad of ten or twelve years, and the girl of twelve or fourteen, will go as boldly to the bar for liquor, and be served as freely, as the parent. There is yet another inducement to females to drink. In many public-house windows, "A Woman's Death Club" may be seen advertised in large letters, and while seeming encouragement is given to the poor to provide for the time of need, the lion's share falls to the publican in the rent of his room and increase of custom.

Great efforts, however, have been made by the friends of temperance to arrest these terrible evils. Remarkable among such efforts are the "Drunkards' Tea-meetings." The first of these was held in St. George's Hall in June, 1868. On that occasion five hundred of the most abject, dissolute, and drunken of both sexes came together by Invitation Tickets previously issued, all then sober. Many men came without coat, hat, shirt, or shoes—women without gown, shoes, or bonnet—unwashed and uncombed—ragged, wretched, and forlorn. It was indeed a pitiable and a fearful sight. After tea, all but one or two stayed to a public meeting. Sixty-one took the total abstinence pledge that evening, and more than half of them have firmly kept it, while some have become members of Christian churches. The drunkards' ranks, however, are but too well recruited. Several similar meetings have since been held, and in 1871 between five and six hundred sat down to a Free Tea. (Two hundred more came, but had to wait for their tea till next day, though all stayed to the public meeting.) Apparently, all were accustomed to drink, though then sober. Just as the meeting was about to begin, an alarm was given that a lady's watch had been stolen. The president *appealed to the honour of the audience*. In less than five minutes he knew who had the watch, and in less than half an hour it was placed in his hands, and exhibited to the meeting. The total abstinence movement has made good progress in the Black Country generally. The Birmingham and Wolverhampton District Association has twenty-four societies on its printed "plan," and while it represents the greater part of the temperance work in the district, does not include it all, for "many of the societies have each a local 'plan' of their own, containing forty, fifty, or sixty speakers (including clergymen and dissenting ministers), who are constantly engaged in propagating teetotal truth." The conference of the above-named association, which has an annual meeting in May and an annual conference in October or November, was lately held at West Bromwich. On the Sunday before the meeting of the conference, forty-seven temperance sermons and twenty temperance addresses were delivered in the various churches, chapels, and schools of the township. A "British Workman Public-house" has recently been opened, where coffee, etc., is sold, and newspapers, magazines, and games are provided, with accommodation for smoking, at a small charge, under the superintendence of an indefatigable temperance missionary.

How dreary is this tract over which we are now passing! How it makes us think again and again of the scenes—

"Where the hedge-side roses blow,  
Where the little daisies grow,  
Where the winds a-mazing go,  
Where the footpath rustics plod,  
Where the breeze-bowed poplars nod,

Where the old woods worship God,  
Where His pencil paints the sod,  
Where the wedded throstle sings,  
Where the young bird tries his wings,  
Where the wailing plover sings,  
Near the runlet's rushing springs,  
Where, at times, the tempests roar,  
Shaking distant sea and shore!"

And yet even here we have a world of wonders, hidden only from the ignorant or the unthinking. Covered up and shrouded beneath our feet are the glories of the Past! It needs but the exercise of a little imagination, and we are roaming amid islands upon whose waters and about whose reedy margins are seen strange and uncouth forms of animal life, and which are crowded with trees of huge growth and magnificent foliage: lofty lepidodendrons, with their delicate feathery fronds; sigillarias, with their beautiful fluted stems rising to a height of seventy or eighty feet; calamites, with their singular whorled leaves and branches; tree ferns and coniferous plants towering a hundred feet above all!—the vegetation of the Old World, an entirely distinct order from that of the present. We remember that it has been said, "Without Fossil Zoology and Botany there would have been no true Geology."<sup>8</sup> We are reminded, too, that there have been counted 1,792 distinct fossil plants, 819 of which pertain to the carboniferous rocks; and that the coal flora of Great Britain alone has 300 species. And though only fragments of these can generally be found, the very fragments are beautiful.

Every here and there the ground is seen sinking, or "crowning in," in consequence of the mining operations beneath. And here is the opening to a mine. By the introduction of our companion we are permitted to descend into it. Slipping on a rough waterproof dress and slouch cap, we enter the "cage," and—hey, presto!—are presently five hundred feet below the surface of the earth. All around us is dark as blackest night, save where here and there a candle glimmers—for there is no fear, it would seem, of explosions in *this* mine. We ourselves have a candle thrust into our hands, and are led by a "butty" carrying another candle, and a "doggy" with a third. On we go, splashing through water and mud,—on through long and narrow passages hewn out of the solid coal, and where dense walls of coal shut us in, while, if at all imaginative, we might fancy the apparently equally solid roof above us (only propped by little baulks of timber) about to descend and crush us. On,—on,—through the thick gloom,—standing aside every now and then to let a truck pass by laden with skips of coal on the way to the bottom of the shaft down which we had ourselves descended. On,—on,—on,—till at length we reach the end of the mine, and see the "hewers" at their work in a half-naked state, some preparing to blast, and the "putters" shovelling into the skips the coal which has already been thrown down. Our time is brief; we talk with the men for a few moments, and learn that the vicar sometimes comes down into the pit to preach to them, and that they have a regular "service" now and then in the dinner-hour. Poor fellows! their life is a hard one. Yet they seem very patient and cheerful. We pity them greatly, but, as they are about to blast, and we have a long distance

<sup>8</sup> Balfour. And we may add what Charles Kingsley has said: "It is a question whether Natural History would ever have attained its present honours, had not Geology arisen, to connect every other branch of Natural History with problems as vast and awful as they are captivating to the imagination."



to go back, take leave of them (we shall look more closely into their condition as we go on), and hasten to the shaft. If there be one idea more than another which possesses us, it is that of the earth being one vast mass of inexhaustible riches. But we finish our journey, the signal is given, and—we are again above ground!

One of the largest proprietors of mines in this neighbourhood—a representative man, a man who has risen—is Mr. James Bagnall,\* senior partner in the firm of John Bagnall and Sons, who is also a great ironmaster. Mr. Bagnall is a wealthy and generous employer, giving work to several thousand men, and ever seeking to promote their social, moral, and spiritual welfare; he is, moreover, a great patron of the Fine Arts, has collected many rare and valuable paintings, and besides numerous choice specimens of Cox, Hooper, and others, includes in his collection Ward's famous pictures, "The Last Sleep of Argyle," and "The Death of Montrose."

The first attempt to record the history of West Bromwich was made in a little volume written about 1837 by Mr. Joseph Reeves, an uncle, as we learn, of Mr. Sims Reeves, some of whose relatives are said to be still living here. Hence we learn that West Bromwich derives its name from "*Brom*," or "*Broom*," a shrub that grows plentifully in this neighbourhood; and "*wyeh*," a dwelling, village, or descent. Many interesting details relative to this place are given in Mr. Reeves's book. He says (and we find him pretty correct), "The soil hereabouts is generally a rich sandy loam, except on the summit of the hills; and it produces good crops of wheat, oats, grass, etc. Even amid the smoke of the collieries, good crops of wheat may be seen growing on the unbroken lands, and also on those that have been broken up, worked out, and reclaimed. Of fruit, there is not much grown; but many of the colliers and workmen have their little gardens, and some of them assiduously cultivate the gooseberry and currant, in the size of which former fruit they take a pride, and they have prize shows. The whole district is naturally pleasant, and in many parts extremely picturesque."

A remarkable character of olden time—one William Parsons—was born at West Bromwich. Mr. Reeves tells us that Parsons when a boy was bound apprentice to a smith, and was so tall that they were obliged to dig a hole in the ground for him to stand in up to his knees while he struck at the anvil. He was afterwards employed as porter to King James I, and was courageous in proportion to his strength, but so good-natured that he scorned to take any advantage of it. Being offended by a man of ordinary stature as he walked London streets, he only took him up and hung him by the waistband of his breeches upon a hook for the amusement of the passengers. He would sometimes, by way of merriment, take up two of the tallest yeomen of the guard and carry them about the guard-chamber, in spite of their resistance!

But our time is gone; so, bidding farewell to our friend, we hasten on our way, take train, and depart.

"All unlovely as an useless skull  
Is man's black workshop in the streeted waste."

The flames from the ironworks we have left behind us are visible from afar. In January, 1872,

\* We regret to hear of Mr. Bagnall's death at the very time this article is passing through the press.

there were sixteen blast furnaces in West Bromwich and Oldbury, eleven of which were then "in blast."

There are many heavily-laden boats, each drawn by one or more horses, to be seen on the canals. We learn that the boatmen are much more civilised than they were; and yet these boats are often the abode of parents and six or seven children. The man drives the horses, and the woman or one of the children steers.

In this neighbourhood is Rowley Regis, whence the Rowley ragstone, so largely used for pavements and roads, is quarried, and where a few years since was carried on a singular and very interesting manufacture of mantel-pieces, slabs, columns, and a variety of similar articles, which were made from the ragstone by melting it, and casting it in its fluid state into moulds. When cast in a film of the utmost possible tenuity, it became a nearly transparent obsidian, or volcanic glass-like substance, which as its thickness was increased assumed successively a pale yellow, yellow, brown, dark brown, and finally an intense black colour; and could be drawn into fine threads and spun. If mixed, while fused, with ordinary coloured glass in a like condition, it became as it cooled a variegated marble-like material, suitable for ornamental building, etc.; or if, when liquefied, it was poured on a metal plate, and rolled while plastic, it could be cut with a diamond, and was useful as a substitute for tiles in roofing, admirably withstanding the weather; it could also be polished like plate-glass, and would serve for decorations. But though the raw material was cheap, the intense heat required to melt it, and other expenses attending the manufacture, made it so costly that about three years after the establishment of the works they were discontinued. It was, as we have said, a singular and interesting manufacture. We may add that the various stages in the change of the substance from obsidian to ragstone have been observed by interrupting the process of slow cooling at different times. A few crystals were first formed at considerable distances apart; these gradually increased in numbers and massiveness as the cooling went on, and the original stony structure was at last completely reproduced.

Rowley Regis stands on an eminence; its church may be seen a long way off. It is almost filled with nailers, a class of whom we shall have more to say by-and-by. The population, which in 1861 was 19,785, in 1871 was 23,531. We are told that this place and Netherton monopolise the manufacture of Jews' harps.

Proceeding through a scene assuming more and more the character of a mining district—barren, rugged, upheaved, black, smoky, and abounding in waste land—we presently reach Dudley.

### THE BONES OF KING STEPHEN.

SITTING at the editorial desk one day, a stranger was introduced whose card described him as an *antiquarian*. In confirmation of his calling he bore with him a portfolio of printed clippings and miscellaneous manuscripts, and also a large box of antique curiosities. On learning that these, as well as the MSS., were brought for sale as well as exhibition, and finding that the antiquary's stories were too elongated for the busy hours of the day, I was compelled

to curtail his visit, and to request him to make any communication in writing.

Shutting the lid of his box, his parting words were, "I have got here the thigh-bones of King Stephen; at least one femur, the other is at my lodging. Shall I show you?" The thigh-bone of King Stephen rolled up in a newspaper!

"To what base uses may we come, Horatio?" Stephen, the grandson of William the Conqueror. Stephen, the builder or founder of Westminster Hall, broken up and sold piecemeal, like the old Pharaohs for mummy!

I refused to look at the thigh-bone, and the antiquarian walked off with his box. He seemed an honest enthusiast, in appearance something between a sexton, a verger, and a pedlar. It is strange that such a man should be allowed to go at large in possession of the bones and coffins of kings and worthies. In old times he would have been a successful trader in relics of the saints and martyrs. One thigh-bone in those days would have multiplied miraculously, and supplied legs enough for an army of martyrs! This roving antiquarian ought to be apprehended, and put into some post where his talents for digging and talking could be turned to useful account for himself and the public. He would make a fair guide at any of our cathedrals.

My request to have his communication in writing brought the following account of

#### FAVERSHAM ABBEY.

It may not be generally known that Stephen died at Dover Castle, October 28, 1154, and agreeably to his last dying request his body was conveyed to Faversham, and there laid in the same vault and chantry chapel as that which contained the coffin and remains of his good queen Matilda and eldest son Eustace. She, having been a nun at Romsey Abbey, Hampshire, and dying, was buried in the old abbey here at Faversham, which she so much loved, we are told, when living. Her palace is now turned into a green-grocer's shop; the street is still called Court Street; and the house has quite a number of those iron-studded doors, with old-fashioned wooden bolts, curious stringed latches and slides, great capacious fireplace, with old Dutch tiles, and wide enough in the chimney-stack at the back to roast an ox whole. It is panelled throughout with black oaken carved work, representing lilies, vines, etc., and the windows are of the old style, looking out to the east towards the old abbey, which stood a little farther to the south-east in the same street.

The site of the church in which the king was buried is now an orchard, with but three or four aged apple-trees growing therein. The little chapel on the north-east extremity is still traceable in the grass growing short there, and forms a perceptible square, in which was the king's monument, now shown in the parish church at some little distance from the abbey. There is now no tomb, but only a Purbeck square marble raised cenotaph, which was removed from the abbey at the Suppression, when history gives out that the tomb of the king was broken open and his bones turned out on to the abbey floor, whilst the lead of the coffin was sold. The king's bones were then cast into the river or creek which flows close by, up which the flood tide rolls alternately every twenty-four hours. But from a careful inspection of the spot wherein the king's body was taken up, I found, to my surprise,

that there was actually not only a perceptible hollow in the crisp grass, which shows whence the leaden coffin of the king was dug up out of the vault, but there were also a few carved stones, mortar, and glazed tiles, left amongst the *débris* thrown out of the vault at the Suppression in 1539; and that curiosity or clumsiness had actually induced the sacrilegious robbers of the king's tomb to leave the two broken upper halves of the king's thigh-bones, with part of the collar and shoulder-bone, etc., also a piece of the yellow decayed coffin-lid, also a nail or two, behind, sticking in the grass, or in a foot-hole near by, also a piece of his knee-cap, evidently cut by the villains' spades, as also a portion of the king's leaden coffin, which was as large as the palm of my hand, and showed several cuts made by the spade upon it. These precious relics of King Stephen, together with a fragment of the stained glass from the east window, I managed swiftly to secure, to my great satisfaction and delight.

It appears quite evident, from the "History of Faversham," that the queen's coffin and bones, also those of her son, are still lying beneath the ground of the orchard, which is full of grassy hills and hollows, where the pillars and walls of the old abbey stood, so long since demolished, and all but forgotten. The abbey had three aisles, and was, I find by striding it, over eighty yards in length by forty yards in width; and it had a crypt beneath the choir, also a subterranean passage; also a fish-pond, with extensive pastures and park attached. A gold noble was dug up near the old abbey wall a short time ago, some pottery, two or three Roman coins, one of Claudius Cæsar, one of William Rufus, and one of Lady Godiva in the Coventry procession, also a handsome silver one of Cæsar Augustus, all most excellent ones, in first-rate preservation.

I found a portion of King Stephen's chain, treble-done, steel armour dress, a curious iron Norman twisted hinge, a short Norman table-knife, only four and a half inches in length; also two thin iron monks' plates, part of a Norman black jug, with head of the king gilt, and flowers worked upon it, besides glass of a curious pattern; and also part of an iron hurdle, with chain linked, and a cowhide network seat, of rudest construction, to fasten convicts to when drawn at horses' tails to the gibbet or place of public execution. These two curious barbarous horse-sleds are now lying in the old abbey cartshed, on Mr. Hilton's farm, and were used for the murderers of Thomas Arden in 1538, whom they had barbarously murdered by tying first a towel around his neck, and then cutting his throat with a broad dagger. They then carried the body out of the house, dragged it bleeding, through the garden, over the abbey wall, and cast it into the meadow of the abbey farm, where it was found: and for this they were sentenced to be drawn and then hanged.

About the time of the good Saxon king Egbert, A.D. 812, it was styled "the king's little town of Faversham," and in one of the charters of King Ethelwulf, the father of the immortal Alfred, king of the West Saxons and of Kent, A.D. 839, it is called the "Villa de Faversham." The parish church dates back to King Ethelbert's time, the first Christian king, A.D. 604, twelve hundred years. The present appearance inside is merely early English, but the red brick tiles of British origin outside, as well as history, testify of its great antiquity. Camden and Leland say that King Athelstane held a parliament or meeting of his wise jarls or thanes hereabouts.

After the year 903, in which several statutes and laws were enacted, the Manor of Faversham belonged to the Crown until Stephen's time, when it was granted to William de Ypres, a foreigner, for his faithful services against the Empress Matilda. The king for these services created him Earl of Kent in the seventh year of his reign, and a few years afterwards he resolved to found an abbey here, about the year 1147, on the north-east side of the town.

## WILLIAM COWPER'S NIGHTCAP.



THE late learned Dr. Maitland, Librarian at Lambeth Palace, has a curious appendix in one of his volumes, headed "Cowper's Nightcap." The book is entitled "Eight Essays on Various Subjects," and in the essay on "Sacred Art" he says "the portrait of St. George could be known by his spear and dragon, just as one would say that must be Elizabeth by her ruff, or Cowper by his nightcap." On this nightcap the author says he has some remarks to make too long for a footnote, but worth a separate place in the appendix. The book having probably been in the hands of few of our readers, we reproduce the pleasant and instructive art gossip about the portrait of a poet every incident of whose life will always have a touching interest. After speaking of the picturesque individuality of the Queen's ruff, Dr. Maitland proceeds in very different strain to protest against the conventional portrait of the poet.

The facts are, I believe, that in the summer of the year 1792, Cowper's portrait was painted by an artist whom Mr. Johnson, the excellent and beloved "kinsman" of the poet, had brought from London for that purpose. In a letter to Hayley, dated July 15, Cowper says,—

"Abbot is painting me so true,  
That (trust me) you would stare,  
And hardly know, at the first view,  
If I were here or there."  
(Southey, vol. vii. p. 132.)

He adds, "I have sat twice; and the few who have seen his copy of me, are much struck with the resemblance." On the 21st of the same month he writes to Lady Hesketh, "My portrait is nearly finished, an excellent one in my mind, and in the opinion of all who see it, both for drawing and likeness" (*ibid.* p. 135). Again, on the 25th, to Mr. Bull he writes that the painter "has succeeded to admiration. The likeness is so strong, that when my friends enter the room where my picture is, they start, astonished to see me where they know I am not" (*ibid.* p. 137). Of course Cowper was too wise a man to have quoted this as a proof that the picture was an accurate likeness; and it seems worth while to explain it by saying that he probably had in his mind the fact that a lady (the wife of a gentleman whom I knew very intimately) had been shown into a room where the newly-painted, unframed picture, representing the poet in a sitting posture, was placed upright on a chair, and had made her courtesy before she found out her mistake. At the same time, though such a circumstance might not be any proof, it is quite certain that the picture was a good likeness; and such, indeed, independently of all testimony, I think all who have seen it must believe it to be.

A week after the letter to Mr. Bull was written, Cowper set out on a visit to Mr. Hayley at Earsham; and from thence, on the 14th of August, he wrote to Mr. Rose, "Romney is here" (*ibid.* p. 143); and on the 26th of the same month to Lady Hesketh, "Romney has drawn me in crayons, and in the opinion of all here with his best hand, and with the most exact resemblance possible" (*ibid.* p. 148).

Thus the two pictures came into existence just about the same time; but certainly as unlike twins as two pictures, both by able artists, and professedly representing the same person at the same age, could be. The reader is, of course, familiar with the engravings of Romney's nightcap sketch; if not, he may find one prefixed to the first volume of Southey's edition of the Life and Works of Cowper. Abbot's picture (a gentleman in a wig, with a pen in one hand, while the other rests on his interleaved Homer, lying open on a writing-desk) he will easily dissect out of the group which is placed as a frontispiece to the seventh volume of the same work.

How soon, or by whom, Romney's sketch was engraved, I do not know; but long afterwards, indeed, when the two pictures were nearly thirty years old, and Mr. Johnson had informed me of his intention to publish some newly-discovered letters, I strongly urged him to have Abbot's picture engraved. His reluctance seemed to arise chiefly from an impression that though Abbot had most faithfully given the man, Romney had done most justice to the poet—that Romney was himself a man of genius, who recognised and knew how to seize on the happy moment of excitement, when genius beamed in the eye and ennobled the features of another—while Abbot, "a sober, quiet man" (Cowper to Hayley, vol. vii. p. 134), had only drawn, though with exquisite precision, a man and a scene as "sober and quiet" as himself—had, in fact, just given us Mr. Cowper, and his book, and his desk, and his table, all



portraits, just as he sat and looked every day at his task of translating Homer—except that, perhaps, he did not every day wear the green coat and buff waistcoat, etc., which formed an archery uniform, put on originally (and I presume on this occasion too) in compliment to the Throckmorton family.

I urged in reply that, supposing all this, it was not sufficient for strangers, and for posterity, to have no other likeness of such a man than a slight sketch of him as he looked in some moment of sudden inspiration—that those who valued his works, and respected his character, would be gratified, and might naturally and justly desire, to see the poet portrayed in a way more descriptive of his usual appearance, and more like the appearance of other people—and that as the picture was there, and the occasion offered, it was a pity not to use it. Probably I said more; but one thing I did not insist on as strongly as I should have done to any one wholly unconnected with the poet. I said little, if anything, of the strong impression which I felt that the man of genius (if Romney was one, a point on which I have no opinion whatever) had not fully comprehended and entered into the character of his subject; and that his dashing crayon had not noted the history written in the very remarkable countenance before him, and faithfully recorded by the unpretending, truthful, probably unconscious, pencil of the “sober, quiet” artist. I do not speak with reference to the great malady with which Cowper was at times, perhaps more or less at all times, afflicted; but of the various traits which those who have studied his works and character would expect to find expressed in his countenance and transferred to his portrait. This, however, is a question which I should like to see discussed by those who are better judges of art than myself.

I do not pretend to say that the poet's kinsman was convinced by my arguments; but perhaps I led him to think of the matter and consult others. In fact, however, when the “Private Correspondence” came out in two volumes octavo, the frontispiece of the first volume was for some reason or other an engraving of Abbot's picture. Far as it was, in my idea, from doing justice to the original, I was rejoiced to see it; and I began to hope that in the contest of *Wig v. Nightcap* the plaintiff's case was not so entirely hopeless as I had feared. But the nightcap was in possession, and not easily to be ejected; and when Southey came down upon us with an unlooked-for mass of evidence, we of the wig party felt that we were altogether put out of court. I did not know what delusion I might have been under. In my simplicity I had always supposed that the cap was only such an one as wig-wearers are wont to use, and that it was a whim of the artist to sketch his subject in that occasional, uncompany costume; but when I saw Southey's graphic witness I began to consider what evidence there was that Cowper was not born in a cap, or that he had ever worn a hat? For though this latter point, as I shall have occasion to observe, is admitted by the other side, I should scorn to take advantage of their conceding what they would probably find it hard to prove. We know that the poet was “velvet capped” at the earliest period of which we know anything—when he was drawn to school in his “bauble coach;” and I will at once admit that a person who wore a nightcap at such times and places as Southey's pictures vouch for, may be fairly presumed to have

worn it, and nothing else, from time to time and at all times. In this nightcap we find him taking the air in the chesnut avenue, which Benevolus had spared him (frontispiece to vol. iii.);—the white cap, too, is the bright spot in the “View of Olney from the Alcove, in Weston Park” (vignette of vol. vi.);—ten years before Romney made his sketch, we find the nightcap at a picnic party in the Spinney; taking, that is, a seven hours' ramble in the woods (frontispiece of vol. iv.; see p. 115);—and at Eartham, while Hayley's visitor, the poet is escorting two ladies in the grounds, wearing the same inevitable cap, and further adorned with a sloppy dressing-gown which he is obliged to hold up that it may not draggle (frontispiece of vol. x). But the gem of the nightcap gallery is the vignette of vol. viii., entitled, “Olney from the Poplar Field.” The poet, though professing to know, as “our fathers knew, the value of a screen from sultry suns,”—though “the poplars are felled,” and he laments “the tree is my seat that once lent me a shade,” yet he will have no other shade, but sits on the tree in his nightcap, though there is a sort of “portable solitude” in the shape of a broad-brimmed hat within his reach. Yet he was sufficiently aware of the usages of society to say, “we bear our shades about us, self-deprived of other screen;” a fact which a man who had only once travelled from Olney to Eartham could scarcely fail to have learned, though for reasons of his own he might incessantly wear a shadeless cap. However, in this picture the artist seems to have felt some sort of compunction, and having placed the poet on the poplar in his nightcap, with his legs outstretched, and his chin resting on his cane, perhaps he bethought him that a gentleman of Cowper's age thus sitting on a poplar all alone, in an open field, might on some ground or other, of hail, rain, or shine, use a hat if it came in his way. Accordingly, he has placed on the ground by his side a conspicuous hat as large as a dripping-pan; and with thoughtful delicacy he has set it crown uppermost, to meet the notion which must inevitably arise in the mind of the spectator, that the head-swathed, staff-supported wretch before him is a diseased, wayside beggar.

I suspect, moreover, that this nightcap has been the parent of the trailing dressing-gown already mentioned. It has perhaps puzzled artists who have had to supply dress and decoration for a full-length figure. Of course something in the large wrapper way was safest and least trouble. Accordingly, at the picnic, the bard is buttoned up in a great coat, though it was just about the middle of the dog-days. In his chesnut-avenue ramble he is girt up in some sort of wrapper which makes him look much more like a bundle of rags tied round the middle, than a gentleman of the Inner Temple.

After considering all this, however, it occurred to me that some of these things might perhaps be only fancies of the artist; that for some reason inscrutable to me, he had felt that he must “deviate from vulgar and strict historical truth in pursuing the grandeur of his design;” and this recollection of Sir Joshua Reynolds brought to my mind an anecdote which Northcote relates respecting him and Dr. Johnson. If I had recollected it at the proper time I should have put it into the Essay to which this Note refers. It shows in a curious manner how men may make a little exception, and be a shade better or worse than their principles,

when it happens that the case is their own. "In 1775," says Northcote, "Sir Joshua painted that portrait of his friend Johnson, which represents him as reading and near-sighted. This was very displeasing to the doctor, who, when he saw it, reproved Sir Joshua for painting him in that manner and attitude, saying, 'It is not friendly to hand down to posterity the imperfections of any man.' But on the contrary, Sir Joshua esteemed it [like the lameness of Agesilaus] as a circumstance in nature to be remarked, as characterising the person represented, and therefore as giving additional value to the portrait (Johnsoniana, part xxi., No. 484, appended to Croker's edition of Boswell's Life of Johnson)."

## Varieties.

**PUBLIC-HOUSES.**—The following testimony from the Rev. F. O. Morris, of Nunburnholme Rectory, Yorkshire, is valuable as bearing on the licensing question:—"Before I was given this rectory by the late Archbishop of York, which was in the year 1854, there had been a public-house in the parish, but it had previously been closed, and there has been none ever since. This, moreover, is one of four adjoining parishes in which there is neither public-house nor beershop, and I may say that a greater blessing to the people and boon to the parson there neither is nor can be imagined. Since the year named above I have never but once that I remember seen an intoxicated person in the village, and that one was in consequence of drink in the hayfield, the weather hot, the work hard, and the liquor, I much misdoubt, none of the most unadulterated. At the same time he was a person who, I believe, was not always a strictly sober man. He has long since left the parish. Besides him, there are two men who break out now and then, when they have the chance, and one who has done so, but I hope is now reformed. I have heard of another; but these are all that I have ever seen or known distinctly of. As to the other three surrounding parishes, I have every reason to believe that their case is to the full the same. One individual in one of them was the only instance of the kind I have ever heard of in any of them, and he certainly used to get spirits to drink at home, and shortened his days thereby. We are four miles from the nearest town."

**SEWER GAS IN HOUSES.**—The prevalence of typhoid fever in London has caused much public discussion as to the badly arranged sewerage in houses. The sum of what the alarmed householder has to do is to satisfy himself that the overflow of typhoid-breeding gas from the sewers is not let directly and unobstructed into his house, but that it is allowed some more easy way of escape into the open air, where it may be diluted and dispersed. As to the cost of the chief remedies a surveyor says:—"1. Ventilation of the sewer by air-pipe to rise above eaves of roof should be about £3; 2. common siphon inserted in drain or soil pipe, including labour (the principal item), about £2 10s.; 3. disconnection of waste water-pipes, etc., from direct connection with sewers, in each case about £3.—Total cost, £8 10s."

**PUBLIC-HOUSE PROPERTY.**—Just as property let for a public-house was increased in value, the value of contiguous properties was deteriorated. It was gross injustice to allow one man to benefit himself at the expense of his neighbours. To illustrate his meaning and show the working of the thing, he mentioned that in 1865 there was a house converted into a licensed house. He did not mention the house, as he did not want to single it out, except as illustrating the view he took of the case, because he happened to know the facts on authority. This house was let for £92 before it became a public-house; after it was licensed it let at £120. The landlord gained £28 by the move. But the rents of three self-contained houses contiguous fell—one of them £15, another £15, another £20. These three houses fell £50 in rent, while this one house rose £28. But besides that, within three years each of these houses stood empty for a whole year, and the loss of rent was £270 of capital to the owners of these houses, and £50 of a loss in perpetuity, in order that the owner of one house might gain £28 a year. He appealed to the common sense of mankind whether that was just? Why should the people in the neighbourhood not have the right to say by

vote—by a mere majority—that they would not allow a house to be erected in that place which would destroy their property? To that extent he went for the Permissive Bill, and beyond it; but he did not go so far as to call a meeting of the inhabitants of any town to vote by two-thirds of a majority that all the public-houses must be shut up forthwith. Sometimes people preached doctrines which they did not practise. He held a strong view, on the principle he had mentioned, about the deterioration of property, and he had put it in practice in a small way. He had to do with a feu of about fifty acres of land, and he had got a clause put into the feu-charters that if any public-house were opened on that land, the person who did so, under the violation of his contract, would forfeit his whole property. The effect of that would be that in the course of a few years they would likely find a suburb of Edinburgh, extending over fifty acres, without a single licensed house in it.—*Mr. Duncan McLaren, M.P.*

**CONVERSATION IN ENGLAND AND IN FRANCE.**—So far as I can judge, the English do not know how to amuse themselves by means of conversation. A Frenchman accounts the happiest moment of his life the period after supper in the private society of well-educated and intelligent men. The brains of all present are then in a state of agitation and effervescence. They converse and think in unison about the same exalted subjects, skipping from one to another in short, pithy phrases, and their general ideas, briskly launched, flutter like a swarm of insects. In the space of two hours the untrammelled talk has made the tour of the globe. Each one contributes a condensation of his thoughts in a jesting or serious style, with exaggeration, a dash of paradox and play of fancy, without meaning his sallies to be literally interpreted, and seeking anything else than a relaxation for his mind. Philosophy, science, morals, art, literature, all the treasures of the human intellect, are there handled, not in heavy ingots, or in large sacks, but in pretty portable golden coins, beautifully engraved, and sparkling and jingling with a cheerful clink, as they are lightly manipulated by delicate fingers. It seems to be that these coins are rare in England, and that, in addition, they are not current. They are regarded as too thin; their alloy gives rise to suspicions. Far more readiness is shown in handling the rough and ponderous metal of which I have already spoken. The conversation indulged in is chiefly instructive; most frequently there is no conversation at all. Several inconveniences arise from this, and tedium is one of them; the mind wants entertainment. In Italy there are the opera and love-making, in Germany philosophy and music, in France the intellectual fireworks just described. Here, nothing is to be found except conscientious labour and useful production, assured and agreeable comfort. Happiness is not complete, however, when one enjoys a fine carriage, a well-appointed house, regular occupation, a seat in Parliament, and the prospect of a seat in Paradise: for amid all these good things there are times when one yawns and feels depressed. Then the luggage is got ready, one steps on board a steamer, and proceeds in quest of change, of something to distract one's thoughts, of a glimpse of the sun.—*M. Taine's Notes on England.*

**LEG OF MUTTON.**—An English gentleman wishing to know exactly what was the loss in cooking, and what the proportion of solid food in an ordinary joint, had a leg of mutton weighed as it came from the butcher's shop, weighed again when cooked, and then the meat pared off and weighed. Before roasting, the leg of mutton weighed 9lb. 10oz.; after roasting, 6lb. 12oz.; weight of cooked meat, 4lb. 13oz.; weight of bone, 1lb. 15oz.; of gravy, 10oz. In paying for a leg of mutton at 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d. a pound, our slice of cooked mutton costs us at the rate of at least eightpence a pound! Australian mutton cooked and without bone can be bought for half this price.

**SERGEANT MURPHY.**—Murphy (recently made a serjeant), a man of boisterous manners, and very fond of sparring with Warren, who had recently written his clever work, called "Ten Thousand a Year." One day at table he called out, "Warren, I never had patience to finish that book of yours, but do tell me what became of Gammon?" Warren seemed not to hear him, and did not answer the question. It was repeated, "Do tell me what was the end of Gammon." Warren then answered, "Oh! they made him a serjeant, and he was never heard of after." A most severe and well-deserved hit at Murphy, whose business had declined ever since he took the coif.—*Recollections of John Adolphus.*

**ADVICE TOO SIMPLE TO BE APPRECIATED.**—"Let the trades unionists give themselves to the cultivation of harmony between employers and employed, cultivating sobriety and thrift, and they will be the happiest community in the world."—*Mr. Mundella, M.P.*